**Regional Research Team Meeting**

**Upper East Region**

**Eliasu Salifu, Desire Dickson and Richard Boateng**

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**October 6th 2015**

The Africa Research In Sustainable Intensification for the Next Generation (Africa RISING) program comprises three research-for-development projects supported by the United States Agency for International Development as part of the U.S. government’s Feed the Future initiative.

Through action research and development partnerships, Africa RISING will create opportunities for smallholder farm households to move out of hunger and poverty through sustainably intensified farming systems that improve food, nutrition, and income security, particularly for women and children, and conserve or enhance the natural resource base.

The three regional projects are led by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (in West Africa and East and Southern Africa) and the International Livestock Research Institute (in the Ethiopian Highlands). The International Food Policy Research Institute leads the program’s monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment.

<http://africa-rising.net/>

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**Background to the project**

Africa RISING project in Ghana is a USAID government funded project led by International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA). It is a research project into sustainable intensification and integration of natural resources to improve productivity, nutrition, income security and reduce hunger and poverty in smallholder families especially children and women. The project is being implemented in the three northern regions of Ghana (Northern, Upper East and Upper West). In the Upper East Region, the project is implemented in Bonia, Gia and Nyangua in the Kassena Nankana Municipality and in Samboligo in the Bongo District.

**Research team meeting**

The research team meeting for the Africa RISING project of the Upper East Region was held on the 11th of September 2015 at the conference hall of the Food and Agriculture Department of the Kassena Nankana Municipal Assembly. In attendance were Africa RISING staff, members of the Research for Development (R4D), members of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) for the intervention communities, Agriculture Extension Agents (AEAs) Municipal Director of Agriculture and Project Partners (Youth Harvest Ghana and SARI)

**Meeting objectives**

The main objective of the meeting was to update Research Team Member and Stalk holders on the current status of Africa RISING Project in the region and also to provide the platform for members to interaction and plan on project activities. Specific ally, the meeting also discussed;

1. The need for households and partners to be more involved in the implantation of project activities;
2. Challenges of implementing project activities and how to resolve them;
3. The Dry Season Vegetable Hub
4. Preparing for the visit of the USAID evaluation team.

The meeting started with an open prayer from Mrs. Anafo Grace, of the Bongo R4D at exactly 10:13am.

The meeting continued with a general introduction from the various participants present. Mr. Eliasu Salifu (Upper East Regional Coordinator) proceeded with the agenda for the meeting and followed with an introduction of the Chairman for the meeting in the person of Mr. Adamu Seidu Vasco, the Director of Agriculture for the Kassena Nankana Municipality.

Mr. Adamu in his acceptance speech, expressed his profound gratitude for having been appointed as the Chairman and also thanked IITA-Africa RISING for organizing these periodic meetings to update research team members and providing the platform for interactions on the project activities. He also advised farmers to put in their maximum best to ensure a successful season this year. According to him, one of the constraints the project has been facing yearly is the inability of the AEAs to visit the project sites often and edged them to do that often if they want the season to be different from the previous once.

**Establishment of technology parks**

Mr. Eliasu Salifu briefed the meeting on activities on the technology parks and edged farmers in particular to be fully involved in the activities on the parks as they are not meant for only data but also to expose or demonstrate good agronomic technologies to farmers. Mr. Eliasu also made it clear that all trials in the technology parks were successfully established per the protocol and that data collection was currently on going.

**Table1:** Trials established in technology parks in each community for the 2015 cropping season

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Community** | **Trial established** |
| **Nyangua** | N fertilizer rates on maize yield, Maize-eggplant intercrop, Maize-pepper intercrop, Maize-okra intercrop, Maize-Roselle intercrop, P fertilizer rates on groundnut yield, Sesame time, spraying regime, ISFM on, soybean yield, N rates and time of under sowing sesame in maize, Insecticide spraying regime on cowpea yield, Water harvesting for intensive crop production in Northern Ghana |
| **Bonia** | N fertilizer rates on maize yield, Maize-legume strip cropping system, Maize-legume rotation system, Maize-eggplant intercrop, Maize-pepper intercrop, Maize-okra intercrop, Maize-Roselle intercrop, P fertilizer rates on groundnut yield and Sesame time and spraying regime, ISFM on soybean yield, N rates and time of under sowing sesame in maize, Insecticide spraying regime on cowpea yield, Water harvesting for intensive crop production in Northern Ghana, Short duration Pigeon Pea |
| **Tekuru** | N fertilizer rates on maize yield, Maize-legume strip cropping system, Maize-legume rotation system |
| **Gia** | N fertilizer rates on maize yield, Maize-legume strip, Maize-legume rotation, Maize-okra intercrop, Water harvesting for intensive crop production in Northern Ghana |
|  |  |
| **Samboligo** | N fertilizer rates on maize yield, Maize-legume strip cropping system, Maize-legume rotation system, Maize-eggplant intercrop, Maize-pepper intercrop, Maize-okra intercrop, Maize-Roselle intercrop, P fertilizer rates on groundnut yield, Sesame time and spraying regime, ISFM on soybean yield, N rates and time of under sowing sesame in maize, Insecticide spraying regime on cowpea yield, Short duration Pigeon Pea |

**Up-scaling and baby trials**

On the Up-scaling and baby trials Mr. Eliasu Salifu made it clear that all trials were successfully established and were being closely monitored in collaboration with the Extension Agents.

**Table 2:** Upscaling and baby trials established in each community for the 2015 cropping season

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Community** | **Up-scaling** | **Maize babies** | **Cowpea babies** | **Soybean babies** |
| Bonia | 40 | 22 | 10 | 10 |
| Nyangua | 40 | 24 | 20 | 10 |
| Tekuru | 40 | 20 | 12 | - |
| Gia | 40 | 20 | 20 | 5 |
| Samboligo | 40 | 20 | 20 | 10 |

**Graduate research work**

A brief progress report by the two graduate students in the region were presented to the house.

**Pig feeding trial by Mr. Bright Amponsah**

Mr. Bright Amponsah reported to the house that the pig feeding trial as part of the African RISING program was carried out in four communities (Bonia, Nyangua, Tekuru and Gia) in the Kassena Nankana Municipaity in the Upper East Region to demonstrate the feasibility of raising pigs intensively. According to Mr. Amponsah, Sixteen (16) farmers were selected from the four communities and each farmer given two pigs for the trial. Thirty two (32) pigs were therefore involved. The pigs were fed with feed ingredients such as rice bran, pito mash, dawadawa flour, mill waste and groundnut skin meal. These feed ingredients according to Mr. Amponsah were readily available in the intervention communities. He said that parameters such as feed intake, weight gain, FCR, girth width as well as economics of production were focused on and that the body condition score of the pigs were considered to know the effects of what they were fed with on their condition.

Mr. Amponsah concluded by adding that the project has successfully come to a conclusion and that the entire 32 pigs were slaughtered for data collection. Some parts of the carcass were kept for analysis, eight carcasses were taken to tamale, and three were kept for the upper east team whiles the 18 were sold at a unit price of GH₵ 40.00. Three carcass went bad and were therefore disposed appropriately and that a sum of GH₵ 720.00 was accrued as proceeds from the sales.

**Soil and water conservation trial by Mr. Basiru Iddi**

Progress on the Soil and Water Conservation (SWC) measures trial was presented to the house by Mr. Basiru Iddi. According to Mr. Iddi the trial involved assessing the effect of Contour farming, half-moon contour ridges and farmer’s practice on the growth and yield components of maize, cowpea and sorghum as well as on soil moisture content. The trial was with the following objectives.

* Assess the growth and yield response of maize/sorghum and cowpea under the mentioned soil and water conservation measures (i.e. contour farming, half-moon, contour ridges and farmer practice).
* Determine variation in soil moisture content retention of contour farming, contour ridges and half-moon on the physiological stages of crops using the gravimetric method
* Assess farmers soil and water conservation (SWC) methods and their level of knowledge on soil erosion and its related effects

The trial was replicated in Gia, Nyangua and Bonia and germination was very good for all the crops in each replicate community except for sorghum which had to be re-sown due to poor germination. Data collection on soil moisture content, Plant height, stem girth, crop biomass, and yield were being measured in all the replicate communities and soil samples have since been collected and taken to UDS laboratory for periodic soil moisture determination.

Finally on the SWC trial, Mr. Iddi added that moisture sensors and tubes were successfully installed with guidance from Dr. Fred Kizito of CIAT in all three replicate communities. These moisture sensors and tubes will in conjunction with the diviner moisture probe, read soil moisture content at different depths.

**Kassena Nankana R4D activities**

A brief report on the Research for Development component of the Africa RISING project in the Kassena Nankana Municipality was made by Mr. Chanagia Edward who is the Chairman of platform. According Mr. Chanagia Edward, the R4D platform in the Municipality has been very active and that the last general meeting was successfully held on the 25th of June 2015. In attendance accordingly were;

* MoFA
* R4D Kasena Nankana / Bongo
* Youth Harvest Ghana
* ACDEP
* SARI
* Representative from member communities in the municipality among others.

According to Mr. Chanagia Edward, the key issues that were discussed among others include;

* Visit of UDAID review team in September
* Completion of R4D action plan which was to be submitted to Dr. Asamoah Larbi
* Youth Harvest Foundation Ghana proposed inclusion of income generating activities such as soap making and dawadawa processing into the R4D programmes.

**Dry season vegetable hub**

Mr. Eliasu briefed the participants on the Vegetable Project that will be established in the dry season to demonstrate technologies that will help farmers improve upon their dry season vegetable cultivations. He made it clear that fenced gardens with mechanized boreholes will be constructed in the intervention communities to serve as technology parks where trials and demonstrations will be held for farmers to implement at their household level.

**Workshops and meetings**

A number of workshops have been organized and attended by the Upper East Regional office of Africa RISING-IITA.

**Soil and water conservation techniques workshop**

Mr. Eliasu Salifu briefed the house on a workshop on soil and water conservation held on the 26th of August 2015 to sensitize participants on basic techniques on soil and water conservation. There were three participants (two males, one female) from each Africa RISING intervention community in the Kasena Nankana and Bongo districts of the Upper East Region. Also in attendance were the AEAs of each community. The representative of the Municipal Director of Agriculture in the Kasena Nankana District was also present to give a speech on behalf of the Director.

The workshop was organized by Dr. Fred Kizito, a senior scientist at CIAT in charge of soil, water and landscape and was supported by Mr. Eliasu Salifu, Upper East Coordinator for Africa RISING-IITA. Dr. Fred gave a theoretical lecture on soil and water conservation and its importance and the role it plays in restoring degraded soils for better crop yield. Dr. Fred also explained the use of a line level and an ‘A’ frame and how to construct one from locally available raw materials.

The second part of the workshop involved a field demonstration on how to use the line level to determine slope and the use of an ‘A’ frame to determine contour lines. The demonstration took place in Nyangua, one of the Africa RISING intervention communities where participants were transported via commercial vehicles. The demonstrations were done by Eliasu Salifu with guidance and support from Dr. Fred. Participants were assessed with a skills and attitudes questionnaire before and after the workshop to ascertain the impact of the workshop.

**Project Mapping and Monitoring Tool (PMMT) workshop**

Mr. Eliasu Salifu also briefed the house on the Project Mapping and Monitoring Tool workshop organized by IFPRI in Tamale and was attended by Eliasu Saifu and Richard Boateng on the 23rd to 25th of August 2015. According Mr. Eliasu, the workshop exposed them to understand where and how Africa RISING activities are taking place. User accounts on the online mapping tool were opened for all participants. Through this account, a user could log on and browse to explore Africa RISING projects,enter Monitoring Data: i.e.updateindicatormeasuresonline, export data to work offline. Through the workshop participants were made to know what sustainable intensification (S.I.) is and the five core S.I. domains and their indicators.

**Closing Remarks**

The Chairman for the meeting in his closing address, thanked all participants for attending and stated, every stalk holder should be prepared for the USAID evaluation Team to enable the evaluation process to go on smoothly. Mrs. Grace Anafo gave the closing prayer and the meeting came to a close at exactly 1:30pm and each participant received a lunch package.

**Annexes**

**Annex 1:** List of participants

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| **No** | **Name** | **Sex** | **Occupation** | **Community** |
| 1 | Cosmos Asaah | M | AEA | Samboligo |
| 2 | Thomas Feladam | M | Farmer | Bonia |
| 3 | Grace Anafo | F | R4D-Bongo | Samboligo |
| 4 | Tangomse P. Felix | M | Farmer | Gia |
| 5 | Alex K. Derrick | M | Farmer | Gia |
| 6 | Martin Seguri | M | Farmer | Nyangua |
| 7 | Chanagia Edward | M | R4D-Kassena Nankana | Bonia |
| 8 | Ewura Jacob | M | AEA | Naaga |
| 9 | Apiribu A. Philip | M | AEA | Bus/Vunania |
| 10 | Adamu Seidu Vasco | M | Director | K/N Municipal |
| 11 | Awal Ahmed | M | AEA | Nyangua |
| 12 | Mark | M | IITA Driver | Navrongo |
| 13 | Ibrahim Shahadu | M | IITA Driver | Tamale |
| 14 | Desire Naab Dickson | M | Technician | Navrongo |
| 15 | Salifu Eliasu | M | Regional Coordinator | Navrongo |
| 16 | Iddi Abdul-Basiru Sanda | M | Graduate Std. Research Associate | Navrongo |
| 17 | Bright Kwame Amponsah | M | Graduate Std. Research Associate | Navrongo |
| 18 | Richard Boateng | M | Research Supervisor | Navrongo |
| 21 | Awopone Roger | M | Technician | Navrongo |